

# PROPER LANGUAGE USAGE LEADS TO SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY: AN INQUIRY INTO THE ARAṆAVIBHAṄGA-SUTTA AND THE CULLAVAGGAPĀḲI

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## ABSTRACT

Language is salience method that mankind use in communication. And, it is an instrument made by the human beings to communicate their senses, emotions, thoughts and knowledge. The identical feature of each language in the world is that they are conventions. Taking into account such languagial conventions, it is to be known that the language we use to speak and write directly stick to convey the meanings. In fact, the complete meaning comes through the set of meanings of the individual words. In other word, while the individual words offer separate meanings and sound, as a group of words, they occur the complete meaning.

There are evidences that a number of social conflicts which covered the way for sustainable society took place in the world due to the miscommunication grounded the poverty of language or language skills and the attachment with language. Broadly speaking on this issue, it is to be said that frequently a large number of social conflicts are arisen as the result of the adherence of language, hermeneutics weaknesses and language barriers. The central

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cause for this issue would be the attachment to the languages that symbolize the culture, haughtiness, civility of the nation. In fact, after analyze carefully the real condition of the languages, it can be known that the languages have no actual identities and people have their unawareness of the real condition of the languages only.

To address the issue perfectly, the Buddhist teachings give immense support in the canonical texts. The teachings clearly discuss how and why people should not attach to the languages and which outcome would be in consequence. Especially, the Buddhist teachings stress that individual actions affect to the society directly and training the individual, indeed, lead to the social enhancement. Accordingly, changing attitudes of the individual on the language would lead to broaden understanding in the society. This paper aims to critically analyze the Buddhist approach towards the language and present the applications in terms of overcoming the social conflicts based on the language and communication. Particularly, only the canonical suttas and their commentaries will be referred herein.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are thousands of languages in the world today. Among them, many of coherent with the culture and nation of those who speak each language. Such a verity of language, sometimes, leads to social conflicts whereof language is referred to be a principal component of each culture by which people are divided and are identified severally. Therefore, this paper is dominantly designed to examine the way in which we should use language to control and enclose social conflicts arisen by means of languages differences and how It effects to the Sustainable Society with reference to the *Araṇavibhaṅga-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Cullavagga pāḷi*.

## 2. DISCUSSION

At the inception, it is worth to know what the sustainable society are. According to the common interpretation, “The ability of a community to develop processes and structures which not only meet the needs of its current members but also support the ability of future generations to maintain a healthy community” (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/social-sustainability.html>) and some other main sources also reveal that

the systematic development of the society in both sides physically and mentally can be interpreted as the sustainable society. Mostly, In the Buddhism the society means the collection of various states of the mentalities. Because, the individual mental background of the human being particularly effects to the society in all manner, when they are associating with other persons. Therefore, the mental activities of the members of the society are bulk and significant facts for the sustainable society. The individual mental and physical development of the mankind directly effects to the sustainable society.

To Wikipedia, Social conflict means “struggle for agency or power in society. Social conflict or group conflict occurs when two or more actors oppose each other in social interaction, reciprocally exerting social power in an effort to attain scarce or incompatible goals and prevent the opponent from attaining them” (Wikipedia). Social conflicts are also found to describe the unawareness or refusing of others’ viewpoints. Some reasons behind which we are left have already been subject to research whereas it clearly becomes more comfortable to find the mental states behind these reasons and social conflicts up to this. It, no doubt, seems that the most effective mental states behind the reasons for social conflicts rise upon languages are ever brought in to light within Buddhist Doctrines. Especially, it is, in keeping with Buddhist Doctrine, known to us that mental states first lead to social conflict as it is found to be based on language though.

*Kalahavivāda Sutta* of the Sutta-nipāta, in particular talks of the causes leading to the social conflicts (Sutta Nipāta, (1913), p.168). How it is said, clinging to something pleasant is caused by hindrance, a deep and impure mental state which is defined in Buddhist philosophy. Moreover, if something subject to be pleasant is should be tolerated as “this is me; this is mine, I am this”. Such a deep and impure psychological state works prior to a certain unwholesome action. Another statement found in the Sakkapañha Sutta of the Dighanikaya in which demonstrates that envy and greedy emotions arrange circumstances for social conflicts (Dīghanikāya II, (1960) 277). We are, according to above facts, emphasized that Buddhism claims to have some mental issues leading to social conflicts.

There is, in the modern world, a group of languages which were acculturated and were not. To the following table also a group of countries which are divided as linguistic diversity.

Over 500 LGS	Over 200 LGS	Over 100 LGS
1. Papua New Guinea 850	1. Nigeria 410	Philippines
2. Indonesia 670	2. India 380	2. Russia
Total 1,520	3. Cameroon 270	3. USA
	4. Australia 250	4. Malaysia
	5. Mexico 240	5. Peoples' Republic of China
	6. Zaire 210	6. Sudan
	7. Brazil 210	7. Tanzania
	Subtotal 1,970	8. Ethiopia
	Total 3,490	9. Chad
		10. New Hebrides
		11. Central African Republic
		12. Myanmar (Burma)
		13. Nepal

(*Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics, Vol. 29 (2007): p.86*)

It is, in the above chart, clarified the linguistic complexity in the world. Acculturated language generally enhances the state of a culture which is claimed by specific people. Therefore, such a language can be called into being division of the same land, For instance, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Turkey, and France (Harvard Magazine, (2002) March). The Wikipedia further says “Anti-Hindu agitation of 193-40, Anti-Hindu agitation of Karnataka, Anti-Hindu

agitation of Tamilnadu, Bengali language movement, Hindu-Urdu agitation” (Wikipedia). Accordingly, there are five linguistic conflicts in India.

All most all the people in the world are bound to his or her own language and religion. An excessively dependence laid between religion and language is perhaps seen (Nation and Nationalism, (2008) online version). Both the language and religion mainly show the uniqueness involved to the nation. Saying concisely, language, religion, and nation are linked together and keep a close relationship. For the most part the name of the language is given to the name of nation too. Obviously, these facts refer to the chief role played by the language. Both religion and nation give uniqueness for the people and so does language. In other word, religion, nation, and language make the diversity amongst the people throughout the world.

The fact next to be discussed is that some traditions leave us behind a radical position concerning to language. People subsequently come to be radical and struggle with each other. On the other hand, the conflicts arose by means of language can be identified as linguistic conflicts. In particular, unawareness of the objective of the language makes the people in such linguistic conflicts.

Language is wise to be thought as a component which proves the way for the mankind only to communicate and exchange their emotions, feelings, thoughts with one another. Far from expecting above purpose from language, certain traditions merely seek for something dogmatic. In fact, this mislead the followers and makes them conflict on linguistic diversity. In addition, any improper way of using a language is shown to be causing social conflicts. In this sort of environment, we are taught that perfect and accurate usage of a language is highly appreciated in Buddhism.

### 3. THE BUDDHIST ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LANGUAGE

The one who narrates the Buddhist teaching will understand that it is not allowed to be strict on the language. In accordance with the *Araṇavibhaṅga-sutta* [Araṇa refers to free from the defilements (na+raṇa)], clinging to the language leaves along with defilements and language is merely a convention or enactment to that we should

not attach. We also narrate that the language should not exceed the universal convention and, the utility of a language is only for knowing the meaning and communication (Majjhima Nikāya III, (1977), pp. 234-235).

In the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta, it is taught how the Buddha used the language unless being clinging to it (Dīga Nikāya I, (1975) p. 202). Some of religions in the modern world give rise to faith on the language in which the religious texts are written. Therein, they lay boundaries on usage of the language and give no weaken opportunities on speech very like the Vedic language.

Speaking the Buddhist viewpoint on this, the Buddha has emphasized that it is unnecessary to promulgate the boundaries on the language to study since it creates barriers in understanding the teachings. The quotation from the *Cullavagga pali* notes thus; the two monks named *Yamelu* and *Thehuka* asked the Buddha “at present, lord, monks of various names various clan various social strata have gone forth from various families; these corrupt the speech of the Buddha in his own dialect. Now we, lord, give the speech of the Buddha in metrical form. The Buddha rebuked them, saying: ‘how can you, foolish men, speak thus: now we, lord, give the speech of the Buddha in metrical form? It is not, foolish men, for pleasing those who are not yet pleased ... And having rebuked them, having given reasoned talk, he addressed the monks, saying: Monk the speech of the Buddha should not be given in metrical form. Who should give it, there an offence of wrong-doing? I allow you, monk, to learn speech of Buddha according to his own dialect” (Chullavaggapali, (1995) 193-194).

Extraction the above clarifications, the conservative aspect on the language by the Buddha and his purpose were only to deliver and understand the doctrine. Further, in the *Ambattha Sutta*, we come across admiration by the Buddha on the inappropriate usage of the language. Here, the Buddha talks about the characteristics of one’s speech, viz.

*Speaking on time (Kālavādī)*

*Speaking on truth (Bhūtavādī)*

*Speaking on meaning (Atthavādī)*

*Speaking on Dhamma (Dhammavādi)*

*Speaking on discipline (Vinayavādi)*

(Dīga Nikāya I, (1975) p.100)

If our speech comprises is made up with these four features, a conflict will not be longer. **The notable fact is that** talking truth is highly appreciated in Buddhism and nobody is allowed to lie. Lying, Rough speech, and talking nonsense are with one accord rejected. This further confirms that Buddhism look into the language being in a middle and ethical position where as some religions expect more from the language rather than the communication.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

According to the facts discussed above, it can be clearly pointed out that the Buddhist approach to the term of disbursement of the social conflicts is totally based on the language. The foundation for this sort of conflicts is the expectation the national haughtiness and religious features from the language and the unawareness of the basic object of the language. These types of social conflicts which arise based on the usage of language covered way for sustainable development of the society. According to the Buddhist teachings, the language should be used only for the purpose of communication without clinging to it.

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